Change my View?

a Digital-Hermeneutics Approach to Dialogism in Online Culture

Inge van de Ven
DH Colloquium,
13 Sept 2023
"Wow, that internet argument completely changed my fundamental belief system," said no one, ever.

some of y'all i don't know who needs to hear this but let that sink in just saying and it shows y'all not ready for that conversation

Don’t @ Me
Overview

1. Trust and Distrust in Online Culture
2. From Hermeneutics to Digital Hermeneutics
3. Analysis: r/changemyview
Hermeneutics

• Study of interpretative practices, including reflection on interpretation itself

• “Interpretation would be impossible if expressions of life were completely strange. It would be unnecessary if nothing strange were in them” (Dilthey, 1914–2005, Vol.7, 225).

• Bible, Homeric allegory, Dante: double layers
The Material Turn in Comparative Literature: An Introduction

Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus

Surface Reading: An Introduction

Reading “The Way We Read Now”

The title of this special issue raises many questions: who are “we”? Although Representation is a multidisciplinary term, it is most commonly used in literary theory to refer to the idea that all human experience is a representation of reality. But what is a representation? And what does it mean to say that something is a representation of something else? This issue explores these questions through a variety of perspectives, including philosophy, anthropology, and linguistics. The articles in this issue consider the role of representation in shaping our understanding of the world, and offer new insights into the complex relationship between language and reality.
Hermeneutics of Suspicion in Online Culture
Hermeneutics of Faith in Online Culture
What characterizes a dialogue ... is precisely this: that in dialogue spoken language—in the process of question and answer, giving and taking, talking at cross purposes and seeing each other's point—performs the communication of meaning that, with respect to the written tradition, is the task of hermeneutics. (361)

Fusion of horizons
Dialogical Hermeneutics

• “the circle of whole and part is not dissolved in perfect understanding but, on the contrary, is most fully realized” (1960: 293)

• What could such a dialogue look like in online culture today, in which the ideological distance between interpreter and text is not primarily an obstacle, but rather a source of productivity?
Scaled Reading

1. **Platform hermeneutics**: what are the specific affordances of the respective platforms; how do they afford modes of self-expression and sociality?

2. **Contextual reading**: what is the contextual horizon against which we can understand the linguistic particularity of the corpus? *term frequency - inverse document frequency (TF-IDF)*. Tool: Voyant.


4. **Hyper-reading**: in what context do we find these discursive particularities and themes in the corpus? *Tool: Concordance views, Antconc.*

5. **Close reading**: what are the stylistic characteristics, internal tensions and conflicts? *Close, human reading of a ‘telling case’.*
Scaled Reading

1. **Platform hermeneutics**: what are the specific affordances of the respective platforms; how do they afford modes of self-expression and sociality?

2. **Contextual reading**: what is the contextual horizon against which we can understand the linguistic particularity of the corpus? *term frequency - inverse document frequency (TF-IDF)*. Tool: Voyant.


4. **Hyper-reading**: in what context do we find these discursive particularities and themes in the corpus? Tool: *Concordance views*, Antconc.

5. **Close reading**: what are the stylistic characteristics, internal tensions and conflicts? Close, human reading of a ‘telling case’. 
1. **Platform hermeneutics:** what are the specific affordances of the respective platforms; how do they afford modes of self-expression and sociality?

2. **Contextual reading:** what is the contextual horizon against which we can understand the linguistic particularity of the corpus? **term frequency - inverse document frequency (TF-IDF).** Tool: Voyant.

3. **Distant reading:** most important themes? **topic modelling,** Tool: Voyant.

4. **Hyper-reading:** in what context do we find these discursive particularities and themes in the corpus? Tool: Concordance views, Antconc.

5. **Close reading:** what are the stylistic characteristics, internal tensions and conflicts? Close, human reading of a ‘telling case’.
1. Platform hermeneutics: what are the specific affordances of the respective platforms; how do they afford modes of self-expression and sociality?

2. Contextual reading: what is the contextual horizon against which we can understand the linguistic particularity of the corpus? term frequency - inverse document frequency (TF-IDF). Tool: Voyant.


4. Hyper-reading: in what context do we find these discursive particularities and themes in the corpus? Tool: Concordance views, Antconc.

5. Close reading: what are the stylistic characteristics, internal tensions and conflicts? Close, human reading of a ‘telling case’.

Scaled Reading
1. **Platform hermeneutics**: what are the specific affordances of the respective platforms; how do they afford modes of self-expression and sociality?

2. **Contextual reading**: what is the contextual horizon against which we can understand the linguistic particularity of the corpus? *term frequency - inverse document frequency (TF-IDF)*. **Tool**: Voyant.

3. **Distant reading**: most important themes? *topic modelling*, **Tool**: Voyant.

4. **Hyper-reading**: in what context do we find these discursive particularities and themes in the corpus? **Tool**: Concordance views, Antconc.

5. **Close reading**: what are the stylistic characteristics, internal tensions and conflicts? *Close, human reading of a ‘telling case’*. 
What is /r/changemyview?

CMV is a subreddit dedicated to civil discourse, and is built around the idea that in order to resolve our differences, we must first understand them. We believe that productive conversation requires respect and openness, and that certitude is the enemy of understanding.

That's why CMV is the perfect place to post an opinion you're open to changing. We're not looking to host aggressive debates, or encourage judgement, but help each other understand different perspectives.

About Community

A place to post an opinion you accept may be flawed, in an effort to understand other perspectives on the issue. Enter with a mindset for conversation, not debate.

Created Jan 16, 2013

3.2m Members

933 Online

Top 1% Ranked by Size
Platform hermeneutics: Reddit

Am I the Asshole?

About Community
A catharsis for the frustrated moral philosopher in all of us, and a place to finally find out if you were wrong in an argument that's been bothering you. Tell us about any non-violent conflict you have experienced; give us both sides of the story, and find out if you're right, or you're错.
Platform
Hermeneutics: CMV Rules

A. Explain the **reasoning behind** your view, not just what that view is (500+ characters required)

B. You must **personally hold** the view and demonstrate that you are open to it changing.

D. Only post if you are willing to have a conversation with those who reply to you, and are **available** to do so within **3 hours after posting**

[Comments:]

2. Don't be **rude or hostile** to other users
&lt;\#8710;&gt; this post convinced me that even if we beat modern diseases we'll never be able to achieve immortality. The laws of physics just can't be outrun! I especially liked how you phrased your comment from the perspective of someone who *did* achieve what we would today call "immortality".

Delta: this post convinced me that even if we beat modern diseases we'll never be able to achieve immortality. The laws of physics just can't be outrun! I especially liked how you phrased your comment from the perspective of someone who *did* achieve what we would today call "immortality".
CMV: I could beat a Cheetah in a fight to the death

CMV: Releasing a book exclusively on Audible is ableist.

CMV: Eating at a restaurant has lost it's appeal.

CMV: We should change the way we think of "subjectivity" and "objectivity".

CMV: Mortal Kombat's Fatalities Ruin the Narrative

In the video game franchise, Mortal Kombat, every mainline game has finishing moves called "Fatalities". These are bloody, grotesque, and graphic executions that the player can perform after they have defeated an opponent. The Fatalities are represented by a "q" button press, which is also used for special attacks, therefore the button is used for both combat and non-combat options. Some of the Fatalities are bloody, grotesque, and graphic executions that the player can perform after they have defeated an opponent. These moves often involve dismemberment, decapitation, and other violence.

In the Mortal Kombat series, Fatalities are a popular aspect of the game, and they have become a signature feature of the franchise. However, some players have criticized the use of Fatalities, arguing that they are too graphic and violent.

The controversy over the Fatalities has continued to grow over the years, and some people have called for a ban on the use of these moves. Some retailers have refused to sell Mortal Kombat games, and some parents have filed lawsuits against the game. In 2017, the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) cut a scene from Mortal Kombat X, which featured a characterene being stripped of their clothes and then being killed with a knife. The BBFC said that the scene was too violent and graphic.

Despite the controversy, Fatalities remain a popular feature of the Mortal Kombat series. The franchise has evolved over the years, and the Fatalities have become more graphic and violent. Some players have criticized the use of Fatalities, arguing that they are too graphic and violent. However, the Fatalities have also been defended as a creative and entertaining aspect of the game.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>people                lgbt community pay police tax becoming ranked could end</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>anything              candidates worse social money religion cant use practice matter</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corporations best employees representation something year automatically process new class</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feel really one completely candidate choice either problem terms showing</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>us system             tip work firefighters paying view culture officers similar</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>would rcv media vote firefighter great society every pool fill</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wrong customers        many college americans theyre used else often s</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>support tipping        problems voting done know gpt gets shit chill</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taxes officer ai        argument others due countries returns ways yougov</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>think companies        using good company deducted depressed decided believe times</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hit</td>
<td>Right Context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe</td>
<td>that the fact that the companies aren't footing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe</td>
<td>that the fact that [therapy demonstrably reduces s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe</td>
<td>that the question of &quot;&quot;Is something human or will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe</td>
<td>that the question as to whether there is free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe</td>
<td>that the a legal system ought to have three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe</td>
<td>that the advent of birth control changed dating. V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe</td>
<td>that the approach of abolishing the police is a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe</td>
<td>that the argument for materialism is supported by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe</td>
<td>that the average American lifestyle results in more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe</td>
<td>that the best way forward is to redefine a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe</td>
<td>that the book is proof). Because you need proof,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe</td>
<td>that the bourgeois didn't earn their wealth. They</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe</td>
<td>that the chalk will or will not break unless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>believe</td>
<td>that the clump of cells growing in a woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>File</td>
<td>Left Context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cmv post...</td>
<td>of which is my wife). There isn’t anything inherently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cmv post...</td>
<td>What’s a body count in this context? There’s nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cmv post...</td>
<td>that same standard, then be quiet. Why? There’s nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cmv post...</td>
<td>reaching western countries in due time.” cmv there is nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cmv post...</td>
<td>and is based on white supremacist ideals. [deleted cmv Nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cmv post...</td>
<td>She’s spitting facts!” In my opinion, there’s nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cmv post...</td>
<td>use the term ‘body count’ are awful. There’s nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cmv post...</td>
<td>Nothing stopping you enjoying/using rainbows. cmv There is nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cmv post...</td>
<td>Britain in the 70’s to now). Objectively there’s nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cmv post...</td>
<td>beneficial for both parties involved.” There is nothing, in theory,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cmv post...</td>
<td>USA is USA. That’s circular definition. There is nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cmv post...</td>
<td>as their own - then yes, there would not be anything</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cmv post...</td>
<td>most of my life. Its a logical choice and nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cmv post...</td>
<td>a large portion of our society believe there’s nothing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It's wrong to just say "<5" because you're not considering

NEVER This is just flat-out wrong.

And it's wrong. "This is a bad take."

You know what kept the economy to work?

Don't get me wrong, I don't believe we're in the best spot, but..."

Wrong but still continue to argue on points that haven't

Wrong about their bodies. Trans men aren't

Wrong signals from your body and not what it is experiencing.

Wrong because Alito dismisses that argument in a

Wrong I don't know what you're trying to say here and

Wrong, but choose wrong. It's actually kind of a meta-post."

It's actually kind of a meta-post."

Wrong here so I could at least try to improve if I'm here

Wrong of me to leave a partner who wants different
So you're actually the mainstream one being anti-woke: believing that traditional values will solve modern problems.

If we send troops in to quickly defeat them here." believing that even God seems to love celebrities more.

I'm not expressing an opinion either way, but I believe that's what the OP meant was sexist". "In the

ardization across these ostensibly developmental jobs." believe that the path to better policing lies in the Stre.

to knock down walls, go in the fire, save that person." believing that both positions of firefighter and police are

insider a multifactorial approach to transitioning.". I don't believe that trans people are lying. Do what I want!

moral difference here that cannot be reconciled. I don't believe that humans are static, we are dynamic and

A choice someone made at 17 against them because you don't believe that humans can change. And maybe

You're going to get blowback. Your phrasing leads me to believe that you aren't actually drawing that distinction.

I pay an unexpected $1,000 bill in cash" believing that a lot of people, perhaps even most, will

all but the most intensive work now a days. I think you believe that you are an empathetic person, but I think

People argue for the restriction of rights when they believe that such restrictions are reasonable and in

most cases are treatable or subside over time." I don't believe that children don't deserve the right to express

their greed and make the sacrifices... So, let's assume that you believe that the GOP focus on non-sustainable ene

Iranian lives, which I disagree on a fundamental level, but if you believe that I don't think I'd be able to change your

personal stories, they use the image of someone else." believing that we should have a right to our own imag
Meta: Using ChatGPT on CMV

With ChatGPT making waves recently, we've seen a number of OPs using ChatGPT to create CMV posts. While we think that ChatGPT is a very interesting tool, using ChatGPT to make a CMV is pretty counter to the spirit of the sub; you are supposed to post what you believe in your own words.

To that end, we are making a small adjustment to Rule A to make it clear that any text from an AI is treated the same way as other quoted text:

- The use of AI text generators (including, but not limited to ChatGPT) to create any portion of a post/comment must be disclosed, and does not count towards the character limit for Rule A.
First, using AI-generated text can provide a starting point for discussion on a topic that might not have been considered before. AI can suggest new perspectives or arguments that may challenge our existing beliefs and encourage us to think more deeply about a particular issue.

Additionally, AI can help identify and address common fallacies or biases in arguments. By analyzing the language used in posts and comments, AI can identify patterns of reasoning or language that may be misleading or illogical. This can lead to more productive discussions where arguments are based on sound reasoning rather than flawed logic.

-this reply was written by ChatGPT
At first I was on the side of not seeing the problem with it, but now faced with an example I see the problem. When writing a reply, I have to consider whether you actually believe and can defend what you wrote. If I ask for clarification or more precision on something, such as

I don't even understand the point of using chat gpt here.

I consider this a place as some form of mental gym to explore and challenge my own beliefs as much as other peoples.

Seems like there is a fair amount of people who are just here to win and farm karma. I've seen a lot of convincing arguments that are waved away by dubious responses that stray away from the spirit of the post. Plus I'm sure some people are trolling. Personally I stopped participating (although still subbed) due to seeing too many people get angered when their view is effectively challenged.
Why do people from different worldviews interpret the same piece of content differently? Rather than thinking about the intention behind the production, let’s analyze the contradictions in the interpretation. This requires developing a strong sense of how others think and where the differences in perspective lie. ... a cultural change about how we make sense of information, whom we trust, and how we understand our own role in grappling with information.

--danah boyd
Conclusion

- CMV: anti-echo chamber?
- Strong emphasis on deliberation, more than dialogue
- Actively shaped by platform affordances and governance
- Platforms: more than ‘backdrops’ for discussion
- Situate platform infrastructure in process dialogue, incl. algorithms and moderation